

# research snapshot

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## The relationships between schizotypy, disordered gambling and gambling-related beliefs

### What this research is about

Schizotypal personality, or schizotypy, refers to a collection of personality traits. Schizotypy is related to schizophrenia, a mental disorder characterized by delusions (false beliefs) and hallucinations. These personality traits include being prone to delusions, struggling with disordered thoughts, and having trouble with relationships. Parts of schizotypy are associated with distorted thoughts and erroneous beliefs. Distorted thoughts and erroneous beliefs are seen in people who gamble, particularly those with disordered gambling. For example, someone might believe that wearing a particular shirt will ensure that they win money again.

Schizotypy may be closely related to disordered gambling, but there has not been much research on this topic yet. The cognitive-perceptual features of schizotypy are most likely to be related to disordered gambling. The cognitive-perceptual features refer to having magical or supernatural thinking and other delusional thoughts (thoughts not based in reality). The aim of this study was to further examine the relationship between schizotypy, disordered gambling, and erroneous gambling-related beliefs.

### What the researchers did

The researchers used data from three sources. Sample 1 included 104 university students over the age of 19 with little gambling experience. Sample 2 included 277 North American adults who were aged 21 or older and who gambled at least once every few months. Sample 3 included 144 North American adults who were aged 21 or older and who were recruited for a study about video gaming. The researchers wanted to capture a range of gambling experiences in this study.

### What you need to know

Schizotypy represents a collection of personality characteristics including delusion proneness and distorted thoughts. Some people who gamble develop disordered thoughts around gambling, including false beliefs about gambling and magical thinking. The authors of this study wanted to know if having schizotypal traits is related to erroneous gambling-related beliefs and disordered gambling. The authors used data from three samples, representing people with a range of gambling experiences. They found that people who endorsed more schizotypal traits had more erroneous gambling beliefs and symptoms of disordered gambling. Schizotypy seemed to be associated with the general belief in luck and bad luck, but not belief in good luck.

All participants completed several questionnaires. The Peters et al. Delusions Inventory (PDI-21) assessed endorsement of unusual beliefs, or delusions. The Schizotypal Personality Questionnaire-Brief (SPQ-B) assessed the three facets of schizotypy, one of which is cognitive-perceptual. Gambling-related beliefs were measured with: 1) the Gambling Related Cognitions Scale (GRCS); 2) the Belief in Good Luck Scale (BIGLS) in Samples 1 and 2; and 3) the Beliefs Around Luck Scale (BALS) in Sample 3. The BALS assesses both beliefs in good luck and bad luck. Symptoms of disordered gambling were assessed with the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI).

### What the researchers found

The researchers found a positive association between the GRCS and PGSI. This means that as scores on the

GRCS increased (i.e., more erroneous gambling-related beliefs), so did scores on the PGSI (i.e., more disordered gambling symptoms).

The researchers also found positive associations between the PDI-21 and GRCS, and the PDI-21 and PGSI. As the degree of unusual beliefs increased, so did erroneous gambling-related beliefs and disordered gambling symptoms. There were positive associations between the SPQ-B and GRCS, and the SPQ-B and PGSI. This means that people with more schizotypal traits had more erroneous gambling-related beliefs and disordered gambling symptoms.

The researchers did not find a relationship between the SPQ-B and BIGLS, with one exception. There was a small positive association between the cognitive-perceptual subscale of the SPQ-B and BIGLS in Sample 1. For university students, those who endorsed more cognitive-perceptual features of schizotypy seemed to believe more in good luck. But in Sample 3, general belief in luck and belief in bad luck, but not belief in good luck, were related to schizotypy.

The cognitive-perceptual subscale of the SPQ-B was strongly associated with the GRCS and the PGSI across all samples. This suggests that people who endorsed more cognitive-perceptual features of schizotypy tended to have more erroneous gambling beliefs and disordered gambling symptoms.

Finally, the researchers found that the relationship between the SPQ-B (schizotypy) and PGSI (disordered gambling) did not remain after taking into account the effect of erroneous gambling-related beliefs. However, there was still a positive association between the cognitive-perceptual subscale of the SPQ-B and PGSI, after taking into account the effect of erroneous gambling-related beliefs. These results suggest that schizotypy might be linked to disordered gambling through erroneous gambling-related beliefs.

### How you can use this research

This research could be useful to researchers and gambling support service providers. Schizotypy is a personality trait and is found in healthy people. The researchers found that the cognitive-perceptual

features of schizotypy are more strongly related to symptoms of disordered gambling and erroneous gambling-related beliefs. Schizotypy might be a risk factor for disordered gambling, but more research is needed.

### About the researchers

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